

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An absorbent article comprising:

a substantially impermeable backsheet;

5 a permeable topsheet;

an absorbent core disposed between the substantially impermeable backsheet and the permeable topsheet;

a pair of elastic leg cuffs comprising a soft nonwoven material, each of said elastic leg cuffs being disposed adjacent to the longitudinal side edges of the absorbent article; and

10 a polymer barrier disposed between the substantially impermeable backsheet and the absorbent core, said polymer barrier being transversely positioned between the elastic leg cuffs, such that the transverse width of the polymer barrier is at least the transverse width of the absorbent core and the transverse width of the polymer barrier is no greater than the distance between the innermost portion of each of the elastic leg cuffs.

15 2. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the soft nonwoven material comprises fibers selected from the group consisting of spun-laced fibers, spun-bonded fibers, melt-blown fibers and combinations thereof.

20 3. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the soft nonwoven material comprises fibers of about 1.00 dtex to about 3.50 dtex.

4. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the soft nonwoven material comprises fibers of about 1.25 dtex to about 3.00 dtex.

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5 5. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the soft nonwoven material comprises fibers of about 1.25 dtex to about 2.75 dtex..

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6. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein said soft nonwoven material has a basis weight in the range of about 0.3-0.8 ounces per square yard.

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10 7. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the soft nonwoven material is selected from the group consisting of polyester, polypropylene, polyethylene and combinations thereof.

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15 8. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the leg cuffs are directly bonded to the substantially impermeable backsheet.

9. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the leg cuffs are directly bonded to the substantially impermeable backsheet and the permeable topsheet.

20 10. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the absorbent core is approximately rectangular.

11. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the polymer barrier is approximately rectangular.

12. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the substantially impermeable backsheet comprises the soft nonwoven material 1.

13. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the soft nonwoven material is selected from the group consisting of polyester fibers, polypropylene fibers, polyethylene fibers and combinations thereof.

14. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the polymer barrier is positioned on said absorbent article so as to not come into contact with the legs of the wearer of the absorbent article during use.

15. The absorbent article of claim 1, further comprising a pair of inner leg gathers disposed on the permeable topsheet, each of said inner leg gathers being positioned outward of a side edge of the absorbent core and inward of the nearest leg cuff.

16. The absorbent article of claim 1, wherein the transverse width of the polymer barrier is greater than the transverse distance between each of the inner leg gathers.

17. An absorbent garment comprising
front and rear waist portions cooperating to form a waist opening;

a crotch region formed between said front and rear waist portions;

a pair of leg openings on opposed sides of the crotch region;

a permeable topsheet;

a substantially impermeable backsheet;

5 an absorbent core disposed between the permeable topsheet and the substantially impermeable backsheet; a pair of stand-up elasticized leg gathers having a distal edge and a proximal edge and positioned inward of said leg openings on opposite sides of a longitudinal center line of the absorbent garment, said leg gathers comprising a non-woven material;

10 a pair of elastic leg cuffs comprising a soft nonwoven material, each of said elastic leg cuffs being disposed adjacent to the longitudinal side edges of the absorbent article; and

15 a polymer barrier disposed between the substantially impermeable backsheet and the absorbent core, said polymer barrier being transversely positioned between the elastic leg cuffs, such that the transverse width of the polymer barrier is at least the transverse width of the absorbent core and the transverse width of the polymer barrier is no greater than the distance between the innermost portion of each of the elastic leg cuffs. 6

18. The absorbent garment of claim 17, said permeable topsheet having a basis weight of about 0.6 ounces per square yard, said permeable topsheet comprising a central liquid permeable portion and a pair of side marginal portions joined to respective opposite side edges of said central portion, said side marginal portions comprising spun-bond, melt-blown, spun-bond (SMS) non-woven material having a basis weight in the range of about 0.3-0.8 ounces per square yard, said central portion of said topsheet comprising a spun-bond polypropylene non-woven fabric.

19. The absorbent garment of claim 17, said substantially impermeable backsheet comprising a non-woven material selected from the group consisting of spun-laced fibers, spun-bonded, melt-blown fibers and combinations thereof.

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20. The absorbent garment of claim 17, wherein said fibers comprise a material selected from the group consisting of polyester, polypropylene, polyethylene and combinations thereof.

21. The absorbent article of claim 17, wherein the polymer barrier is positioned on said absorbent article so as to not come into contact with the legs of the wearer of the absorbent article during use.

22. An absorbent garment comprising:

front and rear waist portions cooperating to form a waist opening;

a crotch region formed between said front and rear waist portions;

a pair of leg openings on opposed sides of the crotch region;

a permeable topsheet, a substantially impermeable backsheet, and an absorbent core positioned between said permeable topsheet and said substantially impermeable backsheet;

a pair of elastic leg cuffs comprising a soft nonwoven material, each of said elastic leg cuffs extending at least through the crotch region adjacent to each leg opening and positioned between said permeable topsheet and substantially impermeable backsheet; and

a polymer barrier disposed between the substantially impermeable backsheet and the absorbent core, said polymer barrier being transversely positioned between the elastic leg cuffs, such that the transverse width of the polymer barrier is at least the transverse width of the absorbent core and the transverse width of the polymer barrier is no greater than the distance between the innermost portion of each of the elastic leg cuffs. 6

10 23. The absorbent garment of claim 22, wherein the soft nonwoven material comprises fibers selected from the group consisting of spun-laced fibers, spun-bonded fibers, melt-blown fibers and combinations thereof. 6

15 24. The absorbent garment of claim 22, wherein the soft nonwoven material is selected from the group consisting of polyester, polypropylene, polyethylene and combinations thereof. 6

20 25. The absorbent article of claim 22, wherein the polymer barrier is positioned on said absorbent article so as to not come into contact with the legs of the wearer of the absorbent article during use. 6